

The NIDDK Fellows Newsletter

November 2008

Upcoming Events

Grant Writing 102

Nov. 10 and 17

10:00 am - 12:00 noon

Building 12B, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Register by contacting Lorraine Moore

LorraineM@intra.niddk.nih.gov (301-496-6685)

Cost: Free

Careers in Science Policy

November 13, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Lipsett Amphitheater, Building 10

Research, government, law, ethics, and society intersect in science policy. Join our panel discussion to learn about careers that use scientific expertise to inform the public, advise lawmakers, influence the direction of scientific research and education, and advocate for those at the bench or bedside.

Speakers:

Dr. Nathaniel Hafer (AAAS Science Policy Fellow, NIH)

Dr. Mike Stebbins (Director of Biology Policy, Federation of American Scientists, and author of "Sex, Drugs and DNA")

Dr. Anne-Marie Mazza (Director, Committee on Science, Technology, and Law, Policy and Global Affairs Division, National Academies)

Dr. Natalia Comella (Office of the U.S. Global AIDS coordinator, U.S. Department of State)

Sponsored by the Career Development Committee of FelCom.

Cost: Free

FelCom Social

November 5, Happy Hour at BlackFinn, Bethesda

November 8, National Geographic Museum visit

November 22, National Museum of American History Reopening Festival

NIDDK Social

November 19, Happy Hour + Wii Party at BlackFinn, Bethesda

For more information about social events contact Chaya Pooput:

pooputc@niddk.nih.gov

The Fellows Advisory Board (FAB) in collaboration with the NIDDK Fellowship Office has started a monthly newsletter to announce events and news. If you would like to help write articles for the newsletter or have an idea for what should be included please contact rasika@niddk.nih.gov.

Winners of the 2008 Nancy Nossal Fellowship Award

Established to honor the memory of Dr. Nancy Nossal, the Fellowship Award offers a great opportunity to all Postdoctoral and Clinical Fellows.

For more details:

<http://fellowshipoffice.niddk.nih.gov/audience/fellowship-award.shtml>

or contact the NIDDK Fellowship office.

This year's winners are:

Anna Allen, Andy Golden's Lab (LBG)

Anna Burkart, Jurrien Dean's Lab (LCDB)

Robert Brychta, Kong Chen's Lab (CEB)

Michelle Mondoux, Mike Krause's Lab (LMB)

Emmanuel Thomas, Jake Liang's Lab (LDB)

CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS!

Exploration into Career options: A Career in Big Pharma

By Erica Rosemond

As many of you are experiencing, there are many other careers to pursue besides the traditional options of academia or industry. I will be writing about various career options in this series.

This month's report: A Career in Big Pharma – Editorial on the seminar “The Science and Business of the Pharmaceutical Industry” presented by Dr. Angelo Del Parigi, MD, Senior Medical Director, Pfizer Inc, NY (former NIDDK fellow – escaped 2005).

Dr. Del Parigi graciously educated the audience of approximately 20 about the drug discovery process of BIG Pharma. He spoke about time lines, money (it takes over 1 billion dollars to get a drug to market), and potential conflict of interests. The question period was most informative from a career development perspective – the following questions and answers are not verbatim.

Q. What are the risks and rewards of a career in a pharmaceutical company?

A. In a pharmaceutical company, there is less certainty; you are sensitive to the availability of resources and things change rapidly, creating stressful conditions. The benefit is that the main goal is to make a difference in real life – there is very good motivation to provide drugs to make health better. There is a perspective and pragmatism about the real world. In an academic setting, you are independent and set the course of your lab. You still need money and funds but the focus seems to be more on grants, papers, conferences and improving health is secondary.

Q. What kinds of careers are available in a pharmaceutical company?

A. In the drug discovery section, biologists and chemists with PhDs are needed in the labs. For clinical trials there are more MDs and they take responsibility for safety monitoring, especially with new molecular entities. For submission of New Drug Applications (NDAs) to the FDA there are PhDs, MBAs, MDs and lawyers.

Q. Where do “fresh” PhDs fit into a pharmaceutical company?

A. There are many postdocs with experience and technicians but try and get into industry as soon as you can because once in, there is still a substantial amount of training that you have to go through to learn the corporate culture and move up. There is much reshuffling of personnel in a pharmaceutical company but if you are versatile and flexible and willing to learn new things then you should be able to survive. If you are not flexible you are penalized. YOU should know whether you are inflexible (academia) or flexible (industry). [One suggestion (from the audience) was to pursue a postdoctoral position in a pharmaceutical company to learn the philosophy early.] There are milestones with deadlines and the pressure is higher in industry than academia. There is a team effort and

sync within the group. Submitting a NDA one day over another may cost the company millions of dollars.

Q. How would a postdoctoral or clinical fellow get their first job in industry? What percentages of new staff positions are filled with people from internal sources, from government institutions and from academic institutions?

A. It really depends if the company is going through expansion (hiring) or contracting (likely re-positioning people internally). It is tougher today than it was 3-5 years ago but we are hopeful that with the new (government) administration things will get better.

In summary, having been at the NIH for three years this seminar wasn't anything I had not already heard before. Getting a position in a pharmaceutical company means being adaptable, flexible and a team player and making a difference in the health of people. It was refreshing to hear his comments about how a person should really know their work personality (flexible or inflexible) and knowing this will help them make an educated decision about whether they would be able to survive in a pharmaceutical company. Worth going to simply to NETWORK!